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F.I.A.E. Chapter 7

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Chapter 7 of FIAE opens with a statement how an ESL teacher revamped the grading scale in his class for judging progress. While the overall approach is interesting it seems complex and not something easily adapted by multiple teachers, but it does tackle one of a teachers biggest nightmares; grades. The book goes on to give the reader a paragraph to read and analyze on what we think the grade should be, and then lists a bunch of scenarios on how what other factors might impact the way in which we grade the same paragraph. It is interesting to see how the factors change the outcome of the grade, almost the same way in which a ‘bell curve’ changes the way a teacher grades a paper. It is a very disconcerting area of teaching when you can take a cross section of teachers from the same subject and grade level and get an equal number of ways to grade the same assessment. The chapter closes with other alternatives to the traditional A, B, C, D, F. They include such things as an I for Incomplete to give the student the option to complete the course work and receive a final grade. Yet another approach uses A, B and “You are not done”. This approach gives the students constant feedback and the ability to constantly change the work and improve. The student is never seen as a failure or too dumb to get a concept, rather just something they need more studying and practice with.

Of all the subjects covered by teaching students, grading remains the one that is not covered as deeply as other subjects. After reading this chapter, the use of a rubric would seem to eliminate many of these issues or concerns. However, the problem is when you are establishing a rubric you are also establishing the criteria on what the students will be judged. With the stress that students are currently under, our class included, is there a better way to grade or to ‘judge’ a student? After all the years that have seen the progression of education, how do grades remain one of the most archaic pieces of that same system? Is there any perfect grading system that both encourages yet also evaluates a students?